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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 002512

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR AND NEA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [BU](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/EU/ASEM: BURMESE ATTENDANCE;
DUTCH/LUXEMBOURG LOGISTICS; SANCTIONS

REF: THE HAGUE 2480

Classified By: POL Counselor Andrew Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Eric Verwaal, Head of Southeast Asia and Oceania Division (and Special Assistant to EU Envoy Hans van den Broek), told poloff October 1 that the Vietnamese had informed him the Burmese participant at ASEM will be: U Tin Winn, identified as "Minister in the Office of Prime Minister." Verwaal believed this individual does not rank higher than the level of Foreign Minister. Further, he clarified that the agreement with the Asians had been that the Burmese "would not attend at head-of-state or head-of-government level." Therefore, he believed that this level of attendance would not prompt a potential walkout scenario as reported reftel. Verwaal speculated that the reason for sending Winn could be that the newly appointed Foreign Minister perhaps "has no clue" about foreign relations, whereas Winn at least has a diplomatic background.

Luxembourg Temporarily Assumes EU Presidency Role

12. (C) In preparation for the Luxembourg PM stepping into the role of the EU Presidency during the ASEM meeting, Verwaal will depart for Hanoi on Wednesday together with Luxembourg PM Juncker so that he can provide a full briefing on the plane. Verwaal also confirmed that Luxembourg had appointed a working-level official to the coordinating committee, as predicted in reftel. Separately, we were informed by Balkenende's office that only a junior staff member from the Dutch PM's office would attend the summits, and that the Dutch MFA would staff Juncker's EU presidency meetings.

Additional Sanctions: Awaiting Trigger

13. (C) Poloff pointed out the apparent lack of progress on the part of Burma toward meeting the three conditions laid out at the September EU GAERC meeting, and asked whether the EU was prepared to put in place the sanctions announced at that meeting. Verwaal confirmed his belief that if the Burmese do not "surprise us" then the EU Ministers will indeed sign off on the sanctions. He said Burmese inaction would "trigger a decision already made." He qualified, however, that "you never know in politics, but this is the agreement." He also repeated previous statements that the Asians would "have until the last moment" to come through, although he appeared to accept that this seemed unlikely.
SOBEL